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How shall we Order our Worship?*

Social and public worship is an institution of God himself, and has always been observed by his people, in all nations and ages. Jesus has given special promises to those who are gathered together in his name. Matt. 18: 20. It was in the assemblies of his disciples, when they were together for devotion, that he particularly manifested himself after his resurrection. It was whilst "they were all with one accord in one place," that the Holy Ghost was first so miraculously poured out. Acts 2: 1-17. And the word of the inspired apostle is: "Let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is." Heb. 10: 22-25.

It is also a matter of importance how these assemblies are regulated, and how the duties for which they meet are to be discharged. These are things which certainly cannot be safely left to the hazards of the moment, or to the option of each individual will. Community of action, presupposes concert, agreement, and some well understood plan. We learn from the writings of Paul, that some of the highest and most miraculous impulses of the spirit may become disorderly, unedifying, and the means of shameful confusion, if not made subject to certain laws of decorum and propriety. Even the spirit of prophecy, in

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these public assemblies, must be brought into subjection, and take its place in order, and obey the pre-arranged judgment by which the whole service is to be governed. 1 Cor. 14: 23-40. A hap-hazard gathering, and a hap-hazard way of dealing with the sacred things of Divine worship, do by no means meet the requirements upon which the apostle insists. People, when they come to worship God, must know what they are about, what it is that they are to do, and how, and in what order they are to do it. And even if the spirit of God is strong upon them, so that they can speak with tongues which they have never learned, and preach with the divine illumination of a prophet, and sing with all the devotion of a saint, if more than one speak at a time, or one sings while the other preaches, or one prays while the other exhorts, the whole thing becomes a scene of confusion and disorder, a mere burlesque and disgrace.

It has, therefore, from the very beginning, been a subject of serious attention among right-minded Christians, how to regulate and direct the exercises of their assemblies for worship.

We sometimes hear people blurting against Liturgies, against forms, against any prescribed order of service. But the most charitable construction that can be put upon it is, that such people do not know what they say. No assembly can join in worship without *doing something*; and if they do something, there must be some way in which they do it; and that way of doing what is done, is their *Liturgy*—their order of service—their ritual, their form. That way of doing things may be extemporized for the occasion, or it may be followed as a matter of custom and common consent without being written or printed in a book, but it is still a form; a style of doing, a ritual, by which the exercises are governed. Just as there can be no religion and no church fellowship without a creed, written or unwritten; so there can be no public

worship without an order of service, either expressed or understood beforehand, or arbitrarily dictated and acquiesced in, at the time. If congregations have settled customs of worship, though not a line concerning them be written, those customs constitute their ritual, their Liturgy. If congregations have no regular customs of worship, but leave everything in the meeting to be directed and arranged by the leader at the time, still, nothing can go on till the rubric is in some way given, and what is to be done next is indicated. If some one rises and says, "Let us sing;" it is the announcement of a Liturgical rubric. If he says, Sing such a hymn; it is the prescription of a form of words, in which that part of the worship is to be performed. If he says, "Let us pray;" it is the announcement of another Liturgical rubric; and if he prays, whether his prayer be written or extemporized, it is a form of words in which the whole congregation is expected to join in the address to God. And so throughout. There can be neither beginning, middle, nor end, without some given rubric and form. Hence, the rejection of premeditated and fixed Liturgical formularies, necessitates the greatest extravagance in Liturgy-making, a new one being required for each recurring service, which, of all sorts of Liturgy-making, is infinitely the worst. The difference between those who have written forms, arranged and fixed beforehand, and those who have none, is that the one class determine to conduct their worship according to the best judgment of the whole congregation and the whole church, whilst the others leave it to the arbitrary dictation of this one, or that, who perhaps has never given the subject an hour's thought, and yet takes upon him, from the mere impulse of the moment, to indicate how the people are to order the most solemn acts, which man can perform on earth.

Let it be understood, then, that *a Liturgy or a ritual, is simply the order that is followed when people come together to*

unite in the worship of God. It matters not, whether that order be written and printed in a book in the hands of the worshippers, or in unwritten customs which they follow without knowing why, or in the unstudied directions which the minister or leader gives at the moment; it is still a form, an order, a *Liturgy*. And there can be no public worship without one.

As there must, therefore, be a form, to direct what is to be done first, and second, and third, and fourth, and who is to do it, and how it is to be done; to make known when there is to be silence, and when there is to be speaking; to indicate when there is to be singing, and when there is to be praying; and to give beginning, continuation and end to the service, it must be evident to every reasonable mind, that that form ought not to be left to the caprice or hazard of the instant, but should be carefully considered, arranged, and settled beforehand, by the best judgment and wisdom which the Church can command.

First of all, the Scriptures themselves are to be carefully searched, and every hint and direction carefully treasured and embodied. From these sacred records we are particularly to search out and settle what things properly belong to a Divine service, so that we may know that what we do is acceptable to God. Nor has any one a right to add to, or to take from, what God has ordained and set forth as acts and elements of His worship. But in order that all these things may be properly embraced, and have their due place and prominence, it is needful that there should be careful study and premeditation, and that the order to be followed should not be left to the chances of the hour.

In the next place, the experience and practice of the people of God, in general, are to be consulted; and what has met with general favor in the best ages, and been approved by the Church in its purest parts, is not to be treated lightly, or set aside without cogent and satisfactory

reasons. What has been sanctioned always, everywhere, and by the best and purest of the churches, to whom, if to any, God's promise of the Holy Ghost, to guide into the way of truth, has been fulfilled, we may safely accept, and confidently adopt. Under the Scriptures, and next to the Scriptures, the voice of the Church is the best light that exists.

But times change, and men and manners change with them, so that every age has its own peculiarities, and its own particular humor and necessities. These have also to be taken into consideration. They dare not be allowed to weigh against anything which God has spoken, nor yet to set aside anything that the Church has everywhere and always received and practiced. But there is always a margin of details of method and usage left to the liberty of the churches, and which must be filled up, according to the requirements or convenience of the times. And this, also, needs to be done with judgment and discretion, requiring deliberation and settlement in some other way than the mere caprice of the moment.

How evidently much better it is, therefore, that all the leading aspects of worship, and whatever relates to its proper rendering, should be settled and established by the united wisdom of such churches as are connected in one fellowship. Not all congregations, or leaders of the worship in congregations, are alike intelligent, prudent, or capacitated to act in such a case. There needs to be mutual counselling, and the deliberation of the best minds, and the sense of the most devout hearts, and the judgment of the most disciplined and cultivated tastes, in order to do the thing properly. And when this has been had, it becomes an act of duty and correct Christian ethics, for individuals to lay aside their personal predilections and preferences, to sacrifice their particular likes and dislikes, and with heartiness to acquiesce in the best and deliberate judgment of the body, of which they claim to be a part.

The scanty records of the primitive Church, do not enable us to say for certain, that any fixed or written form of public worship was instituted by the apostles, or enjoined by them upon their disciples. It is, indeed, expressly stated in the book of the Acts, that the Church was no sooner established, than it united and held together by common acts of devotion. "They continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers." Acts 2: 42. It may also be gathered from some passages in the Acts, and in the Epistles of St. Paul, that special meetings of the believers were held on the first day of the week, and that the Lord's Supper was celebrated at the time of the common meal. This latter practice led to certain abuses in the Corinthian Church, which were censured by the apostle. 1 Cor. 11: 21. And as we thus find him setting in order certain irregularities in the method of conducting Divine service, it is hardly possible that the infant churches did not receive apostolic instructions on the subject in general. On the contrary, among the "traditions," which St. Paul gave to his disciples, there most likely were directions, more or less definite, on this head. Liturgies are indeed extant, which bear the venerable names of St. James and St. Mark; but as they cannot be traced back to the first age, and at no period were universally accredited as the work of apostolic men, we are not justified in assigning to them, at least in any considerable portion, such high antiquity and authority. Still, churches existed under the apostles, and worship was celebrated; and some approved method of doing it, must also have existed.

Descending to the age which immediately succeeded the apostles, the commencement of the second century, we find reason to believe that fixed forms of public devotion were at that time in use, which must necessarily have originated in large part with the apostles. Justin Martyr, in his *First Apology*, written about A. D. 140, and presented to the

Roman Emperor and Senate, in the name of all Christians, gives a description of the worship as it was celebrated in his time, which looks as if the thing were well settled and understood among Christians generally. After describing the baptism of a catechumen, he says :

"We offer prayers in common for ourselves, for the baptized person, and for all men." This is after the sermon. "Then there is brought to the presiding brother a portion of bread, and a cup of mixed water and wine: he takes it, and offers praise and glory to the Father of all, through the name of the Son and the Holy Spirit, and returns thanks to Him for having vouchsafed to give us these things. When he has made an end of both the prayers and the thanksgiving, the people answer *Amen*, which in Hebrew signifies, So be it. Then those whom we call deacons give to each person present, a portion of the bread, and wine and water, over which the thanksgiving has been said, and they also carry away to the absent. This food we call the Eucharist, which no one may receive, except those who believe in the truth of our doctrines, and who have also been baptized for the remission of sins, and who live according to the commandments of Christ." Soon afterwards, he speaks of "the food, *over which thanks are given in the words of His [Christ's] prayer*," thus showing that the repetition of the Lord's prayer was part of the eucharistic service; and a little further on, he says: "On Sunday, as the day is called, the inhabitants of town and country assemble together, and the memoirs of the apostles and writings of the prophets are read as long as time permits. When the reader has finished, the presiding brother makes a discourse, exhorting us to the imitation of these worthies. Then we stand up and pray; and when the prayers are done, bread and wine are brought, as I have just described, and he who presides, sends up thanksgivings and prayers, as well as he is able, and the people answer *Amen*." This was written about one hundred years after

the death of Christ, and about twenty-five years after the death of the apostle John.

In the year 325, Cyril, of Jerusalem, delivered a series of catechetical lectures, in one of which he describes and explains the communion service, as it was celebrated in his day, where he says: "The minister cries aloud, 'Lift up your hearts.'" "For," says he, "we ought indeed, at that solemn season to have our heart on high with God, and not below, thinking of earth and earthly things. Then ye answer, 'We lift them up unto the Lord.' Then the minister says, 'Let us give thanks to the Lord.' Then ye say, 'It is meet and right.' After this, we make mention of heaven and earth; of angels and archangels, and of the seraphim whom Isaiah saw encircling the throne of God, and who cried, 'Holy, holy, holy, Lord God of Sabaoth.' And we repeat this confession of the seraphim, that we may join our hymns with those of the heavenly hosts. Then having sanctified ourselves with these spiritual hymns, we call upon God to send his Holy Spirit upon the gifts of bread and wine lying before Him. Then we entreat God for the peace of the Church and the world, for kings, for soldiers, for the sick and afflicted, and all who stand in need of help. Then we commemorate those who have fallen asleep before us. Then we say the Lord's Prayer. After this, the minister says, 'Holy things to holy men.' Then ye say, 'One only is holy, one only is the Lord Jesus Christ.' After this the chanter, with a holy melody, invites you to the communion of the holy mysteries, saying, 'O taste, and see that the Lord is good.' Then ye receive, not common bread and wine. Then follows a prayer and thanksgiving.—*Humphry on the Book of Common Prayer, Bingham, Riddle and others.*

These particulars are mentioned in detail, because they furnish about all that is known of the form of Divine worship practiced in the churches of the first centuries, and that it may be seen how thoroughly the authorized Litur-

gies of our own Church have taken in, and been modeled after the practice of the most eminent Christians, next following the inspired apostles.

From the fourth century onward, all the churches we know of, had their regular and established orders of service, which were everywhere very punctiliously observed. There were some minor variations in different sections of the world, but in substance, universal Christendom performed its worship, as Justin Martyr and Cyril say it was performed in their time.

But, whilst all churches retained, in substance, and mostly in the very words, the forms found in use soon after the apostles' times, there is no country in which additions were not made, and a multiplication of rites and ceremonies invented, which were gradually engrafted upon the primitive worship. Two tendencies in the Church, the one Judaizing and the other Heathenizing, both contributed to this; which was greatly facilitated by the in-com-ing of false conceptions of religion itself, and by the lordly pomp and distinction which were bestowed upon certain orders, established among the clergy. And thus, from the Pagan temples, the Hebrew ceremonies, the imperial courts, and the fancies of men of all descriptions, Christendom came to be overlaid with a complicated "Ritualism," as interminable and multidudinous in its extent, as it was fantastic in its character, and crushing to Gospel truth and piety in its effects.

It would require volumes to describe all the rites, ceremonies, and farcical performances, high and low, great and small, for living and dead, for persons and things, which were made to pass under the name of Christian worship. But as a good deal is said about "*the ceremonies of the Mass* ;" and as we find in them a full picture of the manner in which the highest acts of Christian worship eventually came to be administered in the western church ; it may, at least, be well to enter into a somewhat particular detail of them.

The various actions of the priest in celebrating Mass, are enumerated as thirty-five, all said to be Symbolic and significant.

1. He goes to the altar, in which we are to see the Saviour's retreat to the garden of Olives.
2. He says a preparatory prayer, also with a mystic signification, referring to the exclusion from Paradise.
3. He makes confession of sin, denoting the burden with which Christ wrestled.
4. He kisses the altar, referring to the Saviour's betrayal with a kiss, and in token of reconciliation with God.
5. He goes to the Epistle-side of the altar and perfumes it, supposing the taking and binding of Christ.
6. He says the Introit, which is to signify the carrying of the Saviour before Caiaphas.
7. He sings, Lord, have mercy upon us, three times over, in allusion to Peter's threefold denial of his Lord.
8. He turns to the altar and says, The Lord be with you, which is to call up Christ's look upon Peter.
9. He reads the Epistle, which is to connect with the accusation of Jesus before Pilate.
10. He bows before the altar and says, Cleanse our hearts, which is Christ being accused before Herod.
11. He reads the Gospel, which signifies Christ's being sent from Herod to Pilate.
12. He uncovers the chalice, which is to represent the stripping of our Lord to be scourged.
13. He kisses the altar and offers the host, which is the scourging of Christ.
14. He elevates, and then covers the chalice, signifying the crowning with thorns.
15. He washes his fingers, which figures Pilate declaring Christ innocent, and blesses the bread, wine and frankincense.
16. He turns to the people, says, Let us pray, and ad-

dressess the Trinity in a low voice, which is to represent Christ being clothed with the purple robe.

17. He says the Preface, which is Christ given over for crucifixion.

18. He joins his hands and prays for the faithful that are living, in allusion to Christ bearing his cross upon which to die that we might live.

19. He covers the host and chalice with a cloth, which is St. Veronica offering Christ her handkerchief.

20. He makes the sign of the cross, signifying that Jesus is nailed to the cross.

21. He adores the host and raises it up, figuring Christ lifted up upon the cross.

22. He consecrates the chalice, and elevates it, which is the shedding of Christ's blood upon the cross.

23. He says the *Memento* for the faithful in purgatory, in allusion to Christ's prayer for His enemies.

24. He raises his voice, smites his breast, and begs God's blessing for the sake of saints he names, which is the dying thief imploring a place in Paradise.

25. He elevates the host and cup, says the Lord's prayer, makes the sign of the cross on the host, chalice and altar, which is Mary, bid to look on St. John as her son.

26. He makes a private prayer to God for peace, through the Virgin Mary and the saints, puts the host upon the paten, and breaks it; which is Christ giving up the ghost.

27. He puts a bit of the host into the chalice, which is Christ descending into hell.

28. He says, and the people sing *Agnus Dei*, three times, which is the return home, smiting their breasts, of those who saw the Lord's sufferings.

29. He says a private prayer for the peace of the Church, kisses the altar, and the pax, which is handed to the people to be kissed, takes the communion himself, and gives to the people, which is to represent Christ making peace by His cross.

30. He puts wine into the chalice, takes what is called

an ablution, repeats a short prayer, pours out wine and water for a second ablution, which he takes with a short prayer; which is the washing and embalming of Christ's body.

31. He sings the prayer for the good effect of the sacrament in the revival of Christians, which figures the Saviour's resurrection.

32. He salutes the congregation, which is the message of peace from the risen Christ.

33. He reads from the Gospel, which is Christ appearing to His mother and disciples.

34. He dismisses the people, which is Christ's ascension into heaven.

35. The Benediction is given, which is the descent of the Holy Ghost from the ascended Christ.

The occasion being one of particular solemnity, and a bishop officiating, the canons and other officers of the Church, receive and wait upon him in state; the organ plays; the master of ceremonies gives the sprinkler to the head canon, who presents it to the bishop, after kissing both it and the bishop's hand. His lordship first sprinkles himself, then the canons, in the name of the Trinity, and proceeds to say a prayer at a particular desk before the altar. He goes to the high altar and repeats the same form, then withdraws into the vestry to receive the vestments suitable for the great solemnity. The sub-deacon takes from a little closet the episcopal sandals and stockings, elevates them, presents them to the bishop, kneels, takes off the bishop's shoes and stockings, while six or eight acolytes, dressed in their robes, kneel around him. Two acolytes, having washed their hands, take the sacred habiliments, hold them up, give them to two deacon assistants, to put them on the bishop, after he has solemnly washed his hands. The deacon salutes the bishop, takes off his upper garment, and puts on his amict, the cross of which he kisses. Then they give him the alb, the girdle, the cross for his breast, the stole, and the pluvial. He kisses the

cross which is upon each of them, and they kiss the vestments put on him. As soon as he is seated, they put his mitre on his head, and present him with the pastoral ring. The deacon then gives him his right glove, and the sub-deacon his left, with kisses of the gloves, and of the hands to wear them. Ejaculatory prayers are connected with each piece of the episcopal robes, which, also, has its particular significance. The stole is the yoke of the Gospel ; the change of foot-gear refers to Moses putting off his shoes ; the dalmatica, which is in the form of a cross, tells of crucifixion to the world ; the alb refers to the purity of the priest's soul ; the pastoral ring denotes the bishop's spiritual marriage with the Church ; the gloves, his insensibility to good works, or the employment of his hands for spiritual ends ; the girdle is the emblem of justice and virtue ; the sandals, of his walk in the paths of the Lord. The two horns of the mitre, are the Old and New Testaments ; the shepherd's crook, his paternal authority ; the pluvial, the remembrancer of the miseries and temptations of life.

Thus arrayed, all the clergy range themselves around him. Two canons or deacons place themselves one on each side, both in their dalmaticas, and after them, a deacon and a sub-deacon. The incense-bearer appears with a censer, and a priest with a navet, out of which the bishop takes incense, puts it into the censer. Then he kisses the cross upon the vestry altar, and goes in procession to the altar, where Mass is to be celebrated. The incense bearer walks at the head of the procession ; two wax candle bearers, with lighted tapers in their hands, march next, on either side of him who bears the cross, and the rest of the clergy follow. The sub-deacon, who is to sing the epistle, carries before his breast a copy of the New Testament, shut, with the bishop's maniple in it. A deacon and a priest, with their pluvials on, march before the bishop, who meekly leans on his two deacon assistants, with the crook in his left hand, and his right somewhat raised to

give his benediction to those Christians whom he meets in the way. Having reached the altar, he salutes his clergy with one bow of the head. When on the lowest step, he gives the crook to the sub-deacon, and the deacon takes off his mitre. Then all make a profound bow to the cross on the altar, after which, the clergy all withdraw, except the sub-deacon who has charge of the crook, the incense-bearer, two deacons, one priest-assistant, who stands at the bishop's right hand, one deacon at his left, and one more behind him. The bishop then says the confession, and the sub-deacon takes the maniple from the book, kisses it, presents it to the bishop to be kissed, kisses the bishop's hand, and puts the maniple on his left arm. Meanwhile the canons repeat the confession. The bishop then goes to the altar, leans toward it, extends his arms upon the table of it, and affectionately kisses it in the middle, while he makes mention of the sacred relics placed in it. The sub deacon then presents him with the New Testament, which he kisses. The incense-bearer comes forward with censer and navet, which he gives to the deacon, and the deacon to the bishop, that the incense may be blessed. The person who officiates then takes the censer, perfumes the altar, gives it back to the deacon, takes the mitre, goes to the epistle-side, and is thrice perfumed by the deacon who holds the censer. The bishop then kisses the holy cross, takes the crosier in his left hand, and, leaning upon his deacon-assistants, goes to his episcopal throne. There, laying aside his mitre, and, making the sign of the cross from the forehead down to the breast, he reads the Introit out of a Mass-book, which an assistant holds before him, whilst another holds up a wax taper. The two deacon-assistants point with their fingers to the place where he is to read; and then all sing in Greek, Lord have mercy upon us; after which the bishop puts on his mitre and his gremial, or sacerdotal apron, and takes his seat, with the two deacon-assistants, one on each side of him, and an assistant-priest on a stool. They all rise when the singing

is finished, the bishop turning to the altar and giving out the *Gloria*, which he continues saying with his ministers. The reading of the Gospel is ushered in by a procession : the master of ceremonies, the incense-bearer, light-bearers with burning tapers, and others, passing in review before the altar, and saluting it on bended knees, as they pass.

At length, comes the sermon ; though this may be omitted, in which case the creed is, at once, proceeded with, and the offertory, after the same style as all the rest. The bishop ceremonially washes his hands, the ring and gloves being removed by assistants. He goes to the altar, two acolytes put a veil over his shoulders, covering, also, the sacred vessels, which veil must hang a little lower on the right side, than the left. Then he takes the chalice and paten with his left hand, his right lying lightly over the veil. When he elevates the host, the deacon who kneels on his right side, takes up the border of the celebrant's *planct*, also at the elevation of the chalice, and the acolyte incenses the body and blood of the Lord three times, whilst the holy candles are all burning. And the rest of the service is concluded as before described.*

It seems as if pardon ought to be asked for this recital of details so puerile, absurd and fantastical. But what must it then be to enact and perform them, as the highest and most sacred Christian worship ! Yet, such is what the services of religion had become at the time of the Reformation, and what they still are in the Roman Catholic churches. There is, also, need to tell out the whole thing faithfully, that it may be seen what that "Ritualism" is, about which so much is very loosely said and written.

It is, also, to be remembered, that this was the mode of celebrating Christian worship, which Luther found in vogue when the truth of God first dawned upon his mind, that it was against this pantomime and mummery, in the name of Christ and religion, he set himself with the heroism of an

* See Burder's Religious Ceremonies.

apostle; that it was from such fantasies and wickedness he labored, and wrote, and suffered, to deliver and separate the true, pure and original rites and services of the religion of Jesus; and, that it was as breakwaters against such abominations as these on the one hand, and against the evaporation of the legitimate Christian rites, into irreverent and empty common-places on the other, that the purified and written Liturgies of our Church were established and fixed in all the nations, which embraced the Lutheran Reformation.

Luther himself put forth the first outlines of a Reformed service, demanding that the worship should be celebrated in the language used by the people, and going back again to the simplicities of the Scriptures, and the primitive forms, as the churches next after the apostles used them. "Ritualism," as practiced in the Romish churches, and so enthusiastically sought to be copied by some misnamed Protestants, has never, anywhere, had place or countenance in any Lutheran churches under the sun. From Luther until now, in all nations, and under all conditions, the Lutheran Church disowns, discountenances and condemns everything of the sort. She is not, however, a Church of mere negations, crying down what she found, with nothing to put in its place. Luther's work was not destruction, but *re-formation*—the bringing to nought of the ruinous fancies and follies of men, and the conservation of the true, original, and proper, scriptural and apostolic, Church of Jesus Christ.

The Lutheran Church, therefore, has her Liturgies and settled forms of worship. She has had them from the beginning, just as the Church next after the Apostles had them. She does not seek to enforce their use, as if there could be no Christianity without them, or as conditions of church-fellowship or salvation; confessing, as she does, that "It is not necessary that human traditions, rites and ceremonies instituted by men, should be alike everywhere;" and that "It is sufficient to the true unity of the Church to

agree concerning the doctrine of the Gospel and the administration of the Sacraments." (Aug. Conf. Art. VII.) But she has given her testimony, clear and distinct, before all men and all angels, and fully recorded her profound conviction and judgment, as to what is a rightly ordered, true and scriptural administration of the rites and ordinances of Christianity. It is, also, from her revision and reformation of the Christian ritual, that all churchly Protestant Liturgies have taken their principal features and character. The English Book of Common Prayer, was originally taken almost bodily from the Lutheran Liturgies, and from the various forms of devotion sifted out of the papacy, arranged by the Lutheran Reformers. Other elements, Romanistic, Puritanic, and Calvinistic, have been since introduced into that book, much marring its consistency and beauty in sundry particulars, as can readily be shown. But wherein it still conforms to the Lutheran service, men mistake, and reverse history and truth, by supposing that we are copying and imitating Episcopalian when we seek to bring out, and to put into use the true and proper service which our Church had framed, recorded, and used, before the English Book of Common Prayer was thought of. So far as there is any copying or imitation in the case, it is England that has copied and followed the Lutherans, and not Lutherans, England.

It has been our misfortune, owing to causes which can easily be traced, that we have never, until now, had a full official rendering of the proper Lutheran service in the English language, particularly in this country. In German we have had it. The writer has in his possession, a copy of a German Liturgy, published in Philadelphia, in the year 1786, by authority of the only Synod of our Church, then in this country, which was in use in the old mother congregation, on Fourth street, in the days of Helmuth and Schmidt, whose names are attached to it, in which the features and characteristics of the proper Lutheran service are contained. The *Confession* is there, in

which the people were to join. The *Kyrie* is there, to be sung or said by all the worshippers. The *Responses* are there for the congregation to take part in audibly, as well as the preacher. The regular *Epistolary* and *Gospel Lessons* are there, with direction that it should not be omitted without necessity. *Offertory* verses are directed to be sung after the sermon, and then the general prayer. Thus, the fathers ordered their worship; and it was Lutheran. But so it has not entirely been with their descendants. Our English Churches have been copyists; and have copied largely after the less churchly denominations around them, to their own and their Church's disadvantage.

Long has the wish and effort of many been to return to the ways of our fathers, from which others enriched themselves, and then boasted that what they had, was of their making. But, until very recently, the means of thus fairly representing ourselves in English, and of conforming our English services to what they are in all other languages, have not been realized. At last, however, we have our Church service in English, embodying the consensus of all original Lutheran Liturgies, set forth by authority, and recommended for the adoption of all our churches.

The *Church Book*, which contains it, is before the public. It is the greatest book that our Church has yet issued on this side of the sea. It should be examined and studied by every Lutheran. Quite sure are we, that it needs only to be understood, to be approved.

The order of service in the new "Church Book," prescribes, that we enter upon our worship, "In the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost." All will readily agree that this is right. It is written: "Whosoever ye do, in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus," Col. 3 : 17; and if, in everything we undertake, we should have reference to the Master whom we serve, much more should we enter upon the solemn acts of worship with a direct and expressed reference to the God whom we propose to honor, on whose appointments

we are about to proceed, and on whose gracious help we are dependent for the ability to perform the duty aright. And as it is God the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, who is our God, the object of our adoration, the Being contemplated in the whole service, and the Divine Majesty, whose bidding we would obey, and whose favor we would seek, reason and Scripture unite in requiring that every instance of such an august transaction should proceed upon this acknowledgment, either expressed or understood. And if the act is to be in all respects complete, and the basis, upon which we proceed, is to be duly recognized, nothing can be more appropriate, edifying and necessary, than that the thing should be declared at the very outstart. And in no way can it be done better than in exactly those words, commanded by the Lord Jesus himself, when he sent forth his ambassadors to make disciples of all nations.

Matt. 28 : 19.

There is, accordingly, great meaning in those opening words. They are few, but they are mighty. They give the key-note of the whole piece, the foundation of the whole edifice. They tell out by whose authority we do these solemn things, to whose honor they are all intended, and on whom we rest for the grace and hope in which we thus propose to edify ourselves and each other. And so momentous are the implications, that it is necessary for each worshipper to recognize the formula, and to make it his own. He must be able to say *Amen* to it, and heartily agree, that things shall proceed upon this basis, and in this spirit; or he cannot hope that his worship will be owned and approved. A mental acquiescence may answer; but, as "from the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh," and as a distinct expression of a feeling, or thought, helps greatly to fix and deepen it, so it is provided that each one shall take hold of the solemn announcement, and link himself with it, by a formal, and personally spoken, "*Amen*."

That such a form of uniting in the utterances of worship was observed in the apostolic churches, and sanction-

ed by their inspired leaders, is proved to us by the Scriptures themselves. Thus Paul, in reproving the Corinthians for their disorderly use of the gift of tongues in their assemblies, demanding of them to adhere to the language understood by the people: "Else," says he, "when thou shalt bless with the Spirit, how shall he that occupieth the room of the unlearned *say the Amen* ($\tauὸ\ ἀμὴν$) at thy giving of thanks, seeing he understandeth not what thou sayest," 1 Cor. 14 : 16. It had been an old ordinance, that the people should ratify the priest's announcement of God's truth by the saying of the Amen. So in Deuteronomy 27 : 14-26, we find it twelve times said: "And all the people shall answer and say, Amen." So, also, in Nehemiah (8 : 6) it is written, that "Ezra blessed the Lord, the great God, and all the people answered, Amen, Amen." So, too, in John's vision of the worship in heaven, when the universal song went up, of "Blessing, and honor, and glory, and power, unto Him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb," "the four living ones said, Amen." Rev. 5 : 13, 14. The highest origin, authority and sanction, therefore, belong to the use of the Amen, as a formula for joining one's self to the worship, and to the particular acts of it, so as to make them heartily one's own. Justin Martyr tells us, that it was the established custom in his day; and the testimony of Paul is decisive, that it was the same in the churches he established. Nay, his specific direction was, that reference should be had to an intelligent saying of "the Amen" in all that should be done by the leaders of the worship; to which also he set the seal of his apostolic authority, saying: "The things I write, are the commandments of God." 1 Cor. 14:37. In the Psalms, also, it stands written, when the Lord God of Israel is blessed: "Let all the people say, Amen." Ps. 106 : 48.

Having, then, put ourselves in position to approach God, and assumed the attitude of reverence and service, it is in place that we should hear something to warrant and encourage that approach. No one can draw near to God

without regard to some Divine word or assurance, that it is lawful, acceptable and promising of good so to do. We cannot approach even one another, without some understood assurance on which we build our belief that we may safely do it; and much more is such an encouragement necessary to warrant us in coming before the Lord. And in order that the matter may not be left unexpressed or doubtful, it is prescribed that the encouragement shall be officially given, and in the very words of the inspired apostles: "Let us draw near with a true heart." Heb. 10: 22. Thus the congregation, being disposed to move toward God, is met with the word of God, inviting it to proceed. It is not man's invitation, but the invitation of the Almighty himself, which he has given to his servants to speak to all who have a mind for communion with him. By the opening words, sealed with the Amen, the congregation takes shelter under the name and authority of the Triune God—stations itself in the Lord, under cover of his name, by his appointment, and for his glory. Hence the people are next addressed as "Beloved in the Lord;" and God's authorized word is spoken to them, that they may take confidence, and go forward with what is in their hearts.

But, wherewith shall we come before the Lord? What offering make? What sacrifice bring? What ceremonies observe? Under the Old Testament, no one was accepted, unless he offered sacrifice, and confessed and atoned for his sins, by the shedding of the victim's blood. No one could enter the holy sanctuary without this. But these ancient sacrifices have all been done away by the offering of the great sacrifice of Jesus on the cross; to whom all the ancient sacrifices pointed, and from which they derived their virtue. The true sacrifice now, is a broken and a contrite heart; a heart conscious of, and penitent for, its sins, and anxious to be forgiven, through the merits of Jesus, who was sacrificed for us. "Thus saith the Lord, To this man will I look, even to him that is poor and of a contrite spirit, and trembleth at my word." Is.

66 : 1, 2. And so the apostle has written: "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." 1 Jno. 1 : 9. And as there can be no reconciliation with God without repentance, so there can be no acceptable worship without an acknowledgment of our unworthiness and guilt, and an earnest seeking of forgiveness through him, who was delivered for our offences and raised again for our justification. This, then, must necessarily be included in every act of approach to God. And especially in the high and formal deed of a whole assembly drawing near to the Almighty, it is neither safe nor proper to leave so vital a matter to the uncertainties of private understanding. It should, in all reason, be distinctly and fully expressed. It is not enough merely to assume that we are sinners, but we must *confess* that we are sinners, and *declare* the plea on which we rest, and through which alone we can hope to stand before God.

And if there is to be any formal acknowledgment of our sins, any expression of penitence for our guilt, any putting forward of our wish and plea for pardon, there is every reason for making this the very first act in the service. It is the first act in the order of salvation. It is the first impulse, which the soul feels when it is awakened to a right sense of God. It was the first and uppermost thing in the thoughts and resolves of the prodigal, as he came to himself, and determined to come back to his father's house. And as there must be baptism for the remission of sins, before there can be the supper of communion and fellowship with Jesus, so the penitential acknowledgment of sin, and the humble seeking of its removal, through Jesus Christ, must precede those higher acts of confidence and liberty before God, to which our worship is meant to grow. Jesus himself has commanded, when we are invited to a feast, to go and sit down first "in the lowest room," until the Master of the house shall bid us "go up higher." And, in the very nature of the thing, which is not so much worship, in the proper sense, as a step in the way of preparation,

for worship, we have the indication, that this should occur right here, as the very first particular to be attended to after we have disposed ourselves to draw near to God.

Accordingly, with the encouragement to draw near, is joined *the exhortation* to make confession of our sins unto God, our Father, beseeching him, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, to grant us forgiveness. It is not man's word, but God's; as it is written: "Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts, and let him return unto the Lord, and he will have mercy upon him, and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon." Is. 65:7. "Return, thou backsliding Israel, saith the Lord, and I will not cause mine anger to fall upon you: for I am merciful, saith the Lord, and I will not keep anger forever. Only acknowledge thine iniquity, that thou hast transgressed against the Lord thy God." Jer. 3:12, 13. "Now, therefore make confession unto the Lord God of your fathers, and do his pleasure." Ezra 10:11.

And in proceeding to make such public confession, it is meet, right and necessary, that both minister and people should recur to the promises, and encourage themselves by the word of God, and the experience of his saints of old. Hence the admirably chosen selections—the Adjutorium and Versicle—with which the act of confession is prefaced. By these the attention is turned back again to the foundation of our hope; and the declaration is made afresh of what we rest on. None but inspired words are used. With the Psalmist we say: "Our help is in the name of the Lord, who made heaven and earth." Ps. 124:8. And to his successful example we refer, where he declares: "I said, I will confess my transgressions unto the Lord; and thou forgavest the iniquity of my sin." Ps. 32:5. It is also necessary to an intelligent and acceptable confession of our sins, that we should proceed to it with exactly such a mental state as these selections express. That state may, indeed, exist without specific expression, and it may be expressed in other words and ways, but certainly not

more scripturally, more briefly, or more completely, than in the mode and terms here prescribed. And as the object of a written formula is, to secure an embodied utterance of all the vital elements of worship, these items have a practical and devotional worth, which the Church has felt, and which exalts them far above any mere ornamentation of the service. They are words fitly set, and fill an office, which well entitles them to the place assigned them.

The act of confession itself is begun and led by the minister, as the representative and head of the assembly; but having humbly stated the facts, he is then audibly joined by each worshipper; and on the basis of the acknowledgment just made, all unite, or should unite, in one combined plea for forgiveness and grace, for Christ's sake.

The confession is, necessarily a general one, in which all classes, old and young, can equally join. Our Articles maintain, that it is neither necessary, nor possible, for men to enumerate all their sins; neither would it be right to make acknowledgment of offences of which many may be innocent. It is a common vice of extemporaneous prayer, that it is apt to say too much, and to make representations to God, which are misrepresentations, in which it is impossible for all to acquiesce. But, that we are all sinful beings, individually and collectively, there can be no question. Each one of us is a member of a sinful race, and has many a time offended. We were conceived and born in sin, and we have all "sinned by thought, word and deed." If any one is not willing to confess this, he cannot come to forgiveness and eternal life. There is no necessity for the multiplication of words; and any form which adequately expresses the facts, may answer; but the thing itself must be done, and in no way curtailed in substance, from the formulas laid down in our service. They are pure; they are scriptural; they are brief; they are comprehensive; and no real improvement upon them has yet been made, or can be. They are just that, to which no true Christian worshipper can decline to say,

Amen ; and just that, in which a public confession of sin is properly and fully made, without useless length as to words, and without disabling abridgment as to substance. They accurately describe each one's condition, to which nothing can be added, and from which nothing can be taken away. They unequivocally set out the only ground, upon which forgiveness is possible, and upon which there is hope for man. And they energetically put forward and hold up before God the imploring plea, for what our situation and our salvation require.

Having thus complied with the encouraging direction, drawn near with a *true heart*, confessed our sins unto God, our Father, and thus earnestly besought him, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, to grant us forgiveness, it is also orderly and right, that there should be an official utterance of those gospel treasures, which by covenant belong to the true penitent, through Christ Jesus. Our confession to God, is met with a declaration of favor from him. And this occurs in the *Absolution*, which is nothing more nor less than a summary statement of the sure promises of the gospel to such as do truly seek the forgiveness of their sins.

There is nothing more sure than this, that God hath no pleasure in the death of the wicked,—that he hath so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him might not perish, but have everlasting life,—that the blood of Jesus Christ, his Son, cleanseth from all sin,—that mercy and pardon are provided and given to every one that believeth,—and that the faithfulness and justice of God are pledged for the forgiveness of every one who does truly confess his transgressions. Equally certain is it, that the very office and appointment of the ministry, is to publish and declare these things to the children of men. They are the gospel, and this gospel is to be preached to every creature, and is specially to be spoken to distressed consciences and penitent hearts. That minister is derelict in the very highest func-

tion of his commission, who fails in this particular. It is the very essence of the ministerial command thus, in the name of God, to bind and loose, and to remit and retain sins, uttering to the penitent the absolution which God has given and commissioned him to speak to such, and to the wicked the condemnation and warning which God has given and commissioned him to speak against the impenitent. And when the minister has before him a whole congregation of penitents, unreservedly and heartily confessing their sins and their earnest desire to be forgiven on the very terms that it is his business to declare forgiveness, it is demanded, by every aspect in which the subject can be viewed, that here certainly he should not be silent as to the chief substance and intent, for which he holds his office. Somewhere in the service he must speak God's forgiveness to the penitent, or he fails to fulfil his commission, and is a most unfaithful servant; and here is a marked occasion and call for it, to comfort and counsel the hearts of the contrite ones, who have just uttered their earnest cries for what God has given him to declare. Our service, therefore, prescribes, that *here he shall say it.*

And that it may be rightly and fully said, and in the fewest and most fitting words, the formula is supplied. Not any carelessly constructed language will answer in a point of such moment. It is the dearest interest of distressed and anxious souls that is involved, in what he is to say. He is to speak that, upon which all the eternal hopes and comforts of men are depending. He must not say too much, lest he should give hope where it cannot truthfully be taken; and he must not say too little, lest he should not give the comfort which Christ has commanded him to give. Nor is there, in all his ministerial duty, a more delicate, or a more momentous office, than just this of setting forth to souls, penitentially seeking the Divine favor, what they may rest on, and how far they may take to themselves consolation of hope. In this, then, if in anything, it is due that there should be the most careful weighing of

words, and a most devout digest and condensation of the whole gospel into a few befitting expressions, upon which faith may safely seize, and to which hope may securely cling.

And this is exactly what is realized in the words of *Absolution*, as given in our Service. The most pregnant statements of the Scriptures on the subject, are gathered into one clear and full declaration, which beams with light, and truth, and hope, pouring its comforting and assuring rays over the whole assembly, and into every believing heart. Like a voice from heaven itself, which it really is, it comes to us, setting out to each the great gospel consolation : "Almighty God, our heavenly Father, hath had mercy upon us, and for the sake of his dear Son, forgiveth us all our sins ;" and that "to them that believe on his name, he also giveth power to become the sons of God, and bestoweth upon them his Holy Spirit." All of which is sealed and confirmed by the direct words of the Lord Jesus himself, where he says: "He that believeth, and is baptized, shall be saved." Whereupon, in one intense prayer, to which each joins himself by the personally spoken *Amen*, the heart is thrown open to what is declared, and the hands of faith lay hold of "this salvation."

Thus far, however, we have been occupied only with the preparations for worship, rather than with the worship itself. Everything, from the very first word and act, is worship, and grasps into itself many of the same elements which run through the entire service ; but nothing in it is so purely, and in so high a sense, that communion with God, or that sublime adoration and enjoyment of him, which pertains to a child of God in sacred converse with his heavenly Father. Our entire service, according to the nature of Christian life and all Godward movements, is progressive, and has various steps and stages. It begins with the lowest, the depths of contrition, and advances from one degree to another, till every point in a complete Christian worship is covered, and the whole is crowned in

the holy communion, and the closing Benediction. And until we have confessed and repented of our sins, and laid hold of the gospel announcements of forgiveness, acceptance and needful grace, we are not the children of God, and cannot stand before him as such. Until then, we have no liberty before God, and cannot suppose that any praise or freedom with him is acceptable in his sight. It is only when we have the assurance of his favor, that our sins are forgiven us, and that his Spirit is with us to empower us to hold converse with the awful Sovereign of heaven and earth, that we can at any time justly enter upon worship in its fullest sense.

But, having confessed and deplored our sinfulness, and earnestly thrown ourselves upon God's mercy in Christ Jesus, and grasped hold of his assurance of forgiveness and grace, we appear before him as his true children, and are in an attitude to enter upon those acts of closer familiarity, which are embraced in worship proper. Hence the Introit, or those utterances, by which we go into the worship, as God's acknowledged children. We have now no longer to "draw near;" for we have already come into nearness to our heavenly Father; and it only remains for us to go forward with that, for which we have come before him.

At this point, however, it is necessary to revert to the occasion which has brought us before him. What is it that we wish? What is the subject, upon which we propose to commune with the Divine Majesty? Not all the topics and themes of Christianity can occupy us at once. Hence these topics have been classified, and referred to particular seasons of the Church Year, and to different times of our appearance before God. There is an Advent season, referring to the coming of Christ, and our preparation to receive him. There is an Epiphany season, referring to the methods, in which the Saviour manifested himself to those whom he came to save. There is a Lenten season and a Passion season, referring more especially to

his sufferings for our salvation. There is an Easter season, referring to his glorious victory over death and hell, and the comforts and assurances clustering around that great event. And there are various other seasons, each having its own more specific burden and theme. We need, therefore, to bethink ourselves as to what is the particular subject, about which we would converse with God, and thank him, and seek his gracious direction and help. To assist and guide us in this is the office of *the Introit*, which is the going into the worship proper. It is carefully prescribed, that the theme of the service may be devoutly and scripturally expressed, all thoughts centred upon it, and all proceedings ordered accordingly. Is it the Advent season? The words of the Introit are: "Say ye to the daughter of Zion, Behold thy salvation cometh. The Lord shall cause his glorious voice to be heard, and ye shall have gladness of heart. Give ear, O shepherd of Israel: Thou that leadest Joseph like a flock." Is it the Easter season? The words of the Introit are: "I am the Resurrection and the Life: all power is given unto me in heaven and earth. Halleluia! Lo, I am with you alway: even unto the end of the world. Halleluia! For to this end Christ both died and rose again, that he might be Lord both of the dead and living." And so in every other season, the Introit, composed of certain pregnant sentences selected from the Psalms or other Scriptures, declares the particular theme or subject then specially in mind for that day's meditations, thanksgiving and enjoyment. It is true that the worship might proceed without this special utterance of the subject of it; but then the matter would be in uncertainty, and the people would be proposing an interview with God, without knowing exactly what they came for, and would have to render their praise and worship without anything specific in their minds for which to give glory. And as we cannot go into converse with God without mentioning something as the theme and subject of that converse, it is orderly and well that the matter should

be carefully thought out in advance, and expressed at the time in proper words, which is done in these Introits, which have been in use in the Church from time immemorial. It is one of the weaknesses and defects of the Episcopal Book of Common Prayer, that it has no Introits.

An invariable part of the Introit, except in Passion Week, is the united ascription of glory to the Father, Son and Holy Ghost, according to a formula which has had its place in the holiest Christian worship from the earliest ages. This is known as the *Lesser Doxology*, as compared with the *Gloria in Excelsis*, which comes afterwards. Prescribed as it is, as a response to the words of the Introit, it has a three-fold reference. It is an act of praise and adoration in general, in view of the glory and majesty of God. But as the first note of praise, which occurs in the service, it refers more definitely to the unspeakable grace, in which we are thus privileged to stand before our Maker and Redeemer as his accepted children. But it also has a yet more direct reference to the blessed things, which are announced in the Introit, and to which the worship at the time is more especially adjusted.

It is prescribed, however, that the *Gloria Patri* shall not be sung in the services of Passion Week. Good Friday is the day above all days, in which the Church has chosen to occupy herself with the particular commemoration of the last bitter sufferings and death of her Lord. While these awful facts are being reviewed, she does not think it fitting to exult after her usual manner. Then the Introit is: "Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world! Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows. He was wounded for our transgressions; he was bruised for our iniquities. All we, like sheep, have gone astray; and the Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all." And as men, when most moved, are often most silent; and even in the worship of heaven there is sometimes a solemn pause, more expressive than

speech (Rev. 8 : 1); the Church has felt that her feelings, at the contemplation of her Lord's sufferings, are best expressed by here putting absolute silence in the place of wanted song.

But on all other occasions of a full service, it is prescribed that this Doxology shall be used. Of old it was commanded: "Give unto the Lord glory and strength; give unto the Lord the glory due unto his name," Ps. 19 : 1, 2. In John's description of the worship in heaven, Doxology plays a most conspicuous part, in which all creatures join, saying: "Blessing, and honor, and glory, and power, be unto Him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb forever and ever," Rev. 5 : 13. We find in the Epistles of Paul, also, a particular formula of this kind, as well as in the writings of other apostles. It was accordingly held as a mark of the true worship in the earlier Christian ages, that it always employed a formula of ascription of glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost.

The most ancient records of the *Gloria Patri*, as employed in Christian worship, give the simple sentence: "Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost, world without end. Amen." In some churches it afterwards read: "Glory and honor be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost, world without end. Amen." When, and by whom, the very appropriate additional phrase: "As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be," was inserted, we know not; but it also occurs in very ancient use. The Arians, on account of their false doctrines concerning the Trinity, labored hard to change this formula, for the reason that it was a standing condemnation of their heresies. It has accordingly ever since been the more rigidly insisted on by all orthodox Churches, as one of the tests of testimonies of a sound faith, as well as a most fitting utterance of praise. Whenever men become squeamish about Doxologies, and particularly this one, which has been hallowed by the use of

all true Christians since the time of the apostles, there is reason to suspect some lurking heresy, touching the most fundamental things of our holy Christianity. The Arians of old, the Socinians after the Reformation, and the Rationalists and Unitarians, of more recent date, could not abide it. But our Church, wherever she has been herself, has always accepted and employed it in her services, along with the early Christians.

Nor is it possible to frame a more scriptural or more expressive formula for the purpose, which this has so long and so universally served. All the ages have not been able to improve upon its sublime words. For brevity, for majesty, for comprehensiveness, and for soul-stirring beauty, there is nothing to compete with it, as an utterance of the holiest worship that a Christian heart can speak. Traced, as it has been, for the most part, to the apostles themselves, and embodying, as it does, their inspired words and heaven-tutored spirit, we would be greatly at fault not to give it place where our Church has always put it. By it our devotions begin to take wings, and to soar aloft from the dust and miseries of earth. By its devout use, we begin to join ourselves to the highest adoration and praise which sound in the Church on earth, or among the worshippers in heaven. And happy he, who, from his soul, can ever sing: "Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost; as it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world without end. Amen."

The *Kyrie Eleison*—"Lord have mercy upon us"—is one of the most ancient and wide-spread forms of address to God known upon earth. With but little variation, it has been employed in the holiest services of God's people, since the days of David and Solomon. We find it in the Psalms, 51 and 123. We encounter it in Matt. 9:27; 15:22; 20:30; and Mark 10:47. It was in common use in the synagogues of the Jews, and so employed by all the apostles. It had a place in all the Greek formulas of devotion, from the earliest ages of the Christian Church.

In its present form, it was in common, if not universal, use, more than a thousand years ago. Luther recommended its employment in every Sunday service. It is prescribed in all the great Lutheran Liturgies. And if there is any one ancient formula entitled to a place in a complete order of service, it is this. It is not possible to find the least objection to it, and its pre-eminent propriety is patent to all who have in them a true Christian sense.

The real nature of the *Kyrie Eleison*, is often much mistaken. A superficial view of it has led some moderns to regard it as a confession of sin, who would, accordingly, have it connected only with the confessional part of the service. It is true, that it readily and beautifully blends with the act of confession, as it does with all prayers, no matter of what specific character; but it is not itself a confession, at least not of sin. It is the cry of conscious weakness and infirmity—a prayer for commiseration and help,—but it is not a confession of sin, any more than the beggar's petition for alms is an acknowledgment of crimes. It blends as readily and beautifully with the sublimest of mortal praises, as with penitential humiliation. We can easily conceive of it, as uttered by the saints in heaven, where there certainly is no more confession of guilt, and no more asking for remission of sins.

There are several connections, in which the Church has used it. From the earliest ages we find it joined to the *Litanies*, which place it still holds. It is itself often called the Lesser Litany. In this connection it partakes somewhat of a penitential character. But we find it as freely joined with the *Glorias*, and with the highest acts of exultant adoration. The truth is, that it affiliates with any and every act of worship rendered by man, and fits as well to the highest as to the lowest. Hence the Church has ever provided for its use in different parts, or sections of her services.

But, we do injustice to the *Kyrie*, by making it a mere adjunct of something else. It has an independent charac-

ter of its own, just as the confession has a character of its own, and the Introit, the Collect, and the Creed. This is fully acknowledged and set out in all the great Liturgies, especially of the Western Church, both before and since the Reformation. And if it has an independent character of its own, it is most justly entitled to a *place* of its own, in the arrangement of the service. Allowing it nowhere to be anything but a prelude or filling out of something else, robs it of its independent character, abridges its meaning, and necessarily makes of it much less than it is.

The "Church Book" inserts it between the Introit and the *Gloria in Excelsis*, or chief Hymn of Praise. (We speak here of the First Order of Morning Service. For the Second we have very little respect, either as an organic structure, or as a Lutheran Service.) In this place we find it a thousand years before the Reformation. Luther, in 1523, directed that, after the Introit, or the Introit Psalm, the Kyrie should be repeated three times, and followed by the singing of the *Gloria in Excelsis*. The Brandenburg-Nürnberg Liturgy (1533), the Saxon Liturgy (1539), and all the great Lutheran Liturgies, so far as we have ascertained, as well as the first English Book of Common Prayer (1549), follow this order. Nor is there, in Liturgies, anything more generally conceded and agreed, than that the Kyrie, whatever other uses may be made of it, is entitled to an independent place in every complete order of divine worship; or than that the place for it is, after the Introit, before the *Gloria in Excelsis*. The modern attempts to rob it of an independent place in the service, and to merge it in the confession of sin, never to be heard of again, except in the subordinate services, in which the Litany is used, certainly *should* not, and, we hope, *will* not, succeed.

Granting, then, that the Kyrie should have a place, as it has a character, of its own, it is easily to be seen that it is only properly located midway between the lowest and the highest parts of the service. In the Confession, the

soul lies prostrate under the heaviest of all human burdens. This is the lowest part of the service. In the Absolution, that burden is laid off, and the promises of forgiveness are applied, to the comfort of every believer. To the peace of remission of sins, through the blood of Christ, the Introit adds the joy of the particular occasion,—of the Incarnation, if it be Christmas, or of the Resurrection, if it be Easter. The worshippers thus come very near before God, gratefully delighting themselves in the high privilege, as expressed in the *Gloria Patri*. But in so sacred a presence, and in thus speaking to the Almighty, the soul cannot bethink itself, without feeling the necessity of new supplies of strength and grace for the situation, or without being impelled to ask the same, in just such words as the *Kyrie* furnishes. What is dust and ashes that it should stand before the Eternal Jehovah, and venture to praise him to his face? How shall miserable man command his thoughts, and words, and feelings, so as to sustain himself in converse so exalted, heavenly and awful? Though released from deserved condemnation for past transgressions, look which way he will, weaknesses and necessities compass him about, for which his own strength is utterly incompetent. He still, and especially in these new and high relations and exercises, needs unspeakable measures of divine commiseration and grace. A heavy pressure is upon him,—not the pressure of unpardonable sin, but the pressure of a sense of unworthiness, and weakness, and conscious inability to stand, much less to advance yet higher, a pressure which demands expression, necessitates some sort of grasping about for the required support. And if any words in human language fit to the case, these words are the *Kyrie Eleison*. In them the congregation sums up all its needs for a happy continuation of this communion with the Almighty, throws itself confidently upon the mercy and grace of the Triune God, and takes hold upon the hand of its Lord, to be led and upheld in essaying to go forward.

In this place, also, the Kyrie has its widest and fullest significance in relation to other parts of the worship. It recalls the stages, through which the worshipping congregation has passed. It expresses the realization of the momentous character of the situation. And it looks forward to all that is to come. It embodies the results of what has gone before, and it prepares for higher acts, that are to succeed. It is a sort of spiritual pausing place, for the gathering of fresh strength in the laborious ascent, laborious by reason of our weakness, where, by looking back over the way that he has come, and upward toward what is yet to be attained, the worshipper leans hard upon his Lord, and pleads not to be forsaken in the high but perilous endeavor. Put the Kyrie anywhere else, and, whatever its appropriateness or beauties may be, its significance is curtailed, its dignity is obscured, and some of its most valuable offices are swallowed up and lost.

Some have thought it an unnatural and repulsive letting down, to introduce the Kyrie Eleison after the high strain begun in the *Gloria Patri*. But the Church has not generally shared this feeling. Luther had no such consciousness. Nor is there a letting down, any more than the second strain in the *Gloria in Excelsis* is destructive of the exultant majesty of worship and adoration which roll through that angelic hymn. A man standing upon some exalted elevation, is just as high when he looks downwards, as when he looks upwards. The alteration in the direction of his vision does not change the altitude of his position. So in this instance. The spiritual stand-point of the worshippers is not changed, only their view is made to take in the situation more fully, and the effort is put forth to have their hold and footing more secure. In the hearing of the *Absolution*, and the good tidings of the *Introit*, the eye of the soul is upward and Godward; and from what it thus beholds, results the bursting forth of praise in the *Gloria Patri*. But, having risen so high, the worshipper begins to glance about him, and to bethink

himself where he is, and to realize the necessities and dangers of his situation, and to make sure of the grace he feels to be required, before adventuring further. And this is what occurs in the proper use of the *Kyrie* in this place. It is not a coming down, but a most devout, energetic and comprehensive application to the Triune God, to be kept from falling. It is not a sudden return to the condition of a penitential confession, but rather a spreading of the spiritual wings for still sublimer ascensions. There are some, also, who are averse to the *Kyrie* on the ground of the repetitions. They have a feeling that it comes under the Saviour's prohibition, where he says: "When ye pray, use not vain repetitions, as the heathen do," Matt. 6 : 7. But, in forbidding "*vain repetitions*," Christ assumes that there are some repetitions, which are *not vain*. An example of heathenish *vain repetitions* is recorded in 1 Kings 18 : 26, where it is said that the idol priests "called on the name of Baal from morning even until noon, saying, O Baal, hear us." It had also become the custom of the Papists, with whom the rubric still holds, that the choir should repeat the *Kyrie* nine times, or continue repeating it until signaled by the priest to desist. Admonitions are also in existence, in Romish records, directing priests and people to repeat it every day one hundred times, as a meritorious work. Such uses of the *Kyrie* are, unquestionably, superstitious, heathenish and *vain*. But the three-fold praying of it once a week, in the main Sunday service, which Luther approved and recommended, and the manner of its use, as proposed in the "Church Book," and Lutheran Liturgies generally, certainly do not fall under this censure. Bartimeus used very urgent repetitions of a similar sort, when he applied to the Saviour to be relieved of his blindness; but so far from discouraging them, Jesus accepted and honored his petition, and miraculously granted his request. Amid the sorrowful pressure in Gethsemane, our blessed Lord himself used this kind of repetition, "*and prayed and spake the same words*" three

times in immediate succession. He also encourages us to be importunate. And in the *Kyrie Eleison*, employed in its proper place, the words being so few, the import so comprehensive, and the situation so impressive, it would be a weakness and an anomaly, not to repeat it. A prayer of *two words*, which grasps in itself all the deepest necessities of Christian life, and sweeps through time and eternity, will not only bear, but, in all reason and propriety, requires, more than a single rehearsal. The best saints that have lived used such repetitions to their profit, and we will not err by copying their example. The minister prays, "Lord have mercy upon us;" and the congregation prays, "Lord have mercy upon us." Three times the minister so prays, and three time the congregation,—*three times*, in allusion to the Trinity of that Almighty and Eternal Being, before whom all stand, and also as expressive of that completeness which connects with the number three.

After the *Kyrie*, direction is given for the singing of the first and the greatest of the Church's Morning Hymns—the *Gloria in Excelsis*. The present Book of Common Prayer puts this Hymn in the Post-communion service, where, neither by origin, character, or the general use of the ancient Church, does it belong. The Holy Sacrament of the Supper, is the crown of all acts of communion with God. Having worthily attended to that Divine Feast, we can go no higher in this world. The next step is heaven. It is not in keeping, therefore, for the worshippers directly to make another effort, and to start a new strain, by here introducing the *Gloria in Excelsis*. A subdued song of praise and thanksgiving is all that is called for, at the close of the communion. But the *Gloria in Excelsis* is not merely such a song. It has other elements, and an active and ascending spirit of adoring supplication, which do not fall in with the final sinking of the service into rest, or the quietude and subsidence of the spirit, in leaving off the

celebration of its highest fellowship with God possible on earth.

If we conceive of the service as a sort of dramatic rehearsal of the work of Redemption, as the early Church largely did, it is particularly out of place to put the *Gloria in Excelsis* after the Communion. In every aspect in which it can be viewed, it connects with Christ's birth, rather than with his death—with the opening of the process, not with its close. Everything, indeed, points more to the *Nunc Dimitis* as the proper Post-communion Hymn, and calls for the *Gloria in Excelsis* just where the "Church Book" places it, and where the original Book of Common Prayer put it, as the first great *Morning Hymn*, looking to the highest work of the day as still before it.

It is often called the Angelic Hymn, for the reason that the first part of it was first sung by the angels, on the first morning of our era. Who put it into the form in which we now have it, is unknown. Its origin dates back to oriental times. It was daily used as a morning hymn in the days of Athanasius. It is one of the very oldest, purest and most cherished of Christian canticles. It was, perhaps, one of those very hymns to which Pliny referred, when he wrote to the Roman Emperor of the Christians of his time meeting together before the dawn, to sing hymns to Christ, as God. Luther refers to it with special commendation, as excellent and glorious, and directed that it should be sung every Sunday, immediately after the *Kyrie*. "Whether it first sprang to light in a burst of choral song, like that inspired hymn in the Acts; or was bestowed upon the Church through the heavenly meditations of one solitary believer; or gradually, like a river, by its tributary streams, rose to what it is," does not matter. We know that it has come down to us from the days of the Church's primeval purity. And though it had to come through dark spiritual morasses, rank with all kinds of errors and idolatries, and often had to keep company with prayers and songs to dead men, and with Aves and Lita-

nies, which savored not of the pure doctrine of Christ, it has reached us without taint or injury, as if carefully guarded on the way by those bright angels, who were the authors of its first grand strain.

A complete hymn, perfect in all its parts, and exactly adapted to be the vehicle of the Church's highest worship, is one of the rarest things to be found on earth. "It cannot be gotten for gold, neither shall silver be weighed for the price thereof. It cannot be valued with the gold of Ophir, with the precious onyx, or the sapphire."

A true hymn is true poetry—true soul, and not machine work. Every word burns with the most exalted and the most truthful feeling and thought, and the whole piece flames, from end to end, with the intensest zeal and fire of devotion, harmoniously, gracefully, justly and fully expressed.

A complete hymn is methodical in its structure, answering the demands of logic and rigid order, with all the freedom and elasticity of utterance, which knows neither constraint nor law.

A true hymn is strongly doctrinal and objective. It epitomizes in few words the substance of the gospel, just as it is to a healthful soul fully awake to it and sacredly moved by it. Mere feeling or sentiment, however well expressed, if doctrinal faith be lacking, is deficient in the highest attribute of a true hymn.

Everything, in a genuine hymn, is worship, and nothing but worship—adoration, praise, zeal for God, glorying in God, glad accord with his will and purposes, earnest seeking unto the Father, Son and Spirit, as the sublimest good, and the only joy and hope of man.*

A complete hymn is brief. The highest and holiest hymnic utterances in the Scriptures, especially those from celestial lips, are all short. The space for the hymn in a full service, is necessarily very narrow. And, if it is what

* See Augustine in Ps. 148.

it should be, the strain is too elevated and intense to be prolonged, lest the mind flag, and the feelings fall.

The range of a perfect hymn, is also heavenly and ample, and is from a stand-point so near the throne of God, that we feel no hindrance to our singing it in heaven.

The combination of all these qualities, in one or two dozen lines, is a different thing from the rhyme-making and subjective platitudes with which our books of song for the Churches are loaded and disgraced. Success in such a work, is more rare than the founding of empires. Its attainment is a greater achievement than the conquest of the world. Yet, we have a few hymns, which well answer to this description. And, among them, this *Gloria in Excelsis* is, perhaps, the oldest and the best. It is, therefore, rightfully selected to fill the first place in the Order of the Church's Worship.

The "Church Book" names a second hymn, as worthy to be interchanged with the *Gloria in Excelsis*, viz.: the *Te Deum Laudamus*. For special occasions, this has generally been preferred, for the reason that there is more of it. But, on that very account, it is not so happily adapted to every Sunday's use. It also is a true and sublime hymn, "rational, majestic, and worthy of the Spouse of Christ," who has been singing it, betimes, for more than a thousand years. By whom it was composed, is not known. Parts of it, doubtless, date back to very early Christian times. The story of its joint composition by Ambrose and Augustine, at the baptism of the latter, is a myth. The germs of it were before these fathers, and some features of it may be of later date. It had its origin in some sacred song of the Orient, and most likely grew out of various early Christian hymns, fragments of which it embodies. It is found in one of the oldest manuscript gospels of the sixth century, immediately following the sacred narratives. It is called the hymn of Ambrose, as he first gave it currency among the Latins. He, perhaps, trans-

lated it into Latin for the use of his church at Milan, adding, it may be, some things of his own. And through his influence, and that of Augustine, it afterwards became one of the chief morning hymns of the Western Churches. It was sung at the coronation of Charlemagne, about A. D. 800, and, after that, at the crowning of succeeding emperors and kings, and on great occasions generally, even to the present day. Luther highly approved it, and himself translated it into German, for the use of the evangelical churches. He calls it an admirable creed, made into song, not only for the setting forth of the right faith, but as a hymn of praise and thanksgiving to God. Comber describes it as at once a song of praise, a creed, and a supplication. "It is faith, seized with a sudden joy as she counts her treasures, and laying them at the feet of Jesus in a song; it is the incense of prayer, rising so near the rainbow round the throne, as to catch its light, and become radiant as well as fragrant,—*a cloud of incense, illumined into a cloud of glory.*

The present Book of Common Prayer, prescribes it as the chief Morning Hymn "daily throughout the year," though allowing an alternative between it and the Apocryphal Canticle, *Benedicte, omnia opera*. If we had not the *Gloria in Excelsis*, the *Te Deum* might, with propriety, hold this high place; but, as it is, the "Church Book," with the Lutheran Liturgies in general, and with the original Book of Common Prayer itself, has more justly decided the merits of the several compositions concerned, and more faithfully followed the ancient Churches in giving the *Gloria in Excelsis* the pre-eminence among the Morning Hymns. Very justly, however, it is provided, that it may be interchanged with the *Te Deum*, when circumstances render it desirable. Other canticles or hymns are also allowed to be used in this place; but none others are acknowledged as having anything like the same claims as the *Gloria in Excelsis*, first, and the *Te Deum, Laudamus*, second. In either of these sacred hymns, but especi-

ally in the *Gloria in Excelsis*, the Church realizes the advent and presence of her Lord. In it she hears the song of the angels over his birth, and takes it up with them, and joyfully makes it her own. Away from self, her thoughts soar to God, and rest, not in her joy in him, but on himself, who is her joy. How profound is the adoration offered ! How thick the thronging praises that well up from her heart, and pour from her lips ! "We praise Thee, we bless Thee, we glorify Thee, we give thanks to Thee, for Thy great glory, O Lord God, heavenly King, God, the Father Almighty !" How profound the adoration she offers to Jesus, only begotten son of the Father, Lord God, and Lamb of God, sitting at the right hand of God, who only is holy, who only is most high ! How passionate the pleadings, that He that taketh away the sins of the world, would have mercy upon her, and receive her prayer ! And how thrilling the burst of praise which presently drowns her notes on plaintive entreaty, as she hails her King, glorified on his throne, in the heights of heaven ! "For Thou only art holy ; Thou only, O Christ, with the Holy Ghost, art most high in the glory of God the Father !" Blessed he, who can sing this song with all his heart, and in whose heart it ever sings, from hour to hour, through all the duties, trials and adversities of life ! His walk is with God, and his path is as the light, which shineth more and more unto the perfect day.

With the *Gloria in Excelsis*, this division of the service terminates. The worshippers have spoken and fully declared themselves. They have risen as high, as they can rise, until they hear God speak. Hitherto He hath not spoken. He has been listening to the voice of his children, and receiving their adoring addresses, but has said nothing. It is now for them to be silent, and to hear what He shall say. They cease their song, and what follows gravitates toward another centre.

